

Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment coversheet & feedback form

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For completion by the student:		
Student Name: Xiaoxue Gong		
Module code: SIC7019	Student ID number: 1706356	Educational support needs: No
Module title: Readings from The Compilation of Books and Writings on the Important Governing Principles		
Module tutor: Dr. Chen,Sufan Assignment due date: 10 th November 2023, 15:00		
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Agreed Internal Mark:	
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AGREED INTERNAL MARK (where necessary):**Comment on process on arriving at agreed mark:****External Examiner's comments (if relevant)**

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Comparing the governance thoughts of Han Feizi 韓非子 and Zhuangzi 莊子 from "Xianxue 顯學" and "Yingdiwang 應帝王"

Student name: Xiaoxue Gong SID: 1706356 Date: 9 November 2023

Word count: 2307

1. A brief analysis of Han Feizi's thoughts on governing the country

Han Feizi believed that a wise monarch would focus on developing his own force. Why would he say that? We can discover the reason from the context of the "Xianxue" chapter. He said that although the monarch of the hostile country said that I have righteousness, I would not pay tribute to him or join the court and become his minister; although the Marquis of Guannei did not appreciate my behavior, I must collect good things and present them to him, pay tribute and be his minister. In other words, the enemy country upholds benevolence and righteousness, but it has no power and is not strong enough, so I will not surrender to it, but can only submit to the Marquis of Guannei who is powerful enough. It can be seen that if a monarch is strong, others will come to worship him and become his minister. If he is weak, he will worship others and become others minister. So a wise monarch should focus on developing his own power. Majestic power can prohibit atrocities, but deep kindness cannot prevent disasters. In addition, a wise king will pay attention to laws and regulations. A wise king governs the country not by relying on people to do good things for themselves, but by keeping them from doing evil. Relying on people consciously doing good things, there will be less than ten such people in the country; and if people are restrained from doing evil, the country will be in order. Those who govern the country should adopt methods that are effective for the majority and abandon measures that are only effective for a few. Therefore, they should not be committed to the rule of virtue but the rule of law. Next, he made an analogy: If you must use naturally straight bamboo shafts to make arrow shafts, then you may not be able to make arrows after a hundred generations; if you must use

naturally grown round wood to make wheels, you may not be able to make them after a hundred generations. There will be no wheels for a thousand generations. There are no naturally straight bamboo poles or naturally round wood for a hundred generations. However, people in the world have cars to sit on and arrows to shoot birds. Why is this? This is because the method of using tools to correct natural objects has been adopted by people. Even though there are naturally straight bamboo poles and naturally round wood that do not rely on tools for correction, skilled craftsmen do not value them. Why is this? Because the person riding in the chariot is not alone, and the archer is not just shooting one arrow. A wise monarch will not value those who consciously do good deeds without relying on rewards and punishments. why? Because the laws of the country cannot be discarded, and it is not just one person who must be governed. Therefore, a monarch who has mastered the method of governing does not pursue the occasional good deeds of a few people, but must implement the inevitable way of governing the country.

Han Feizi did not agree with governing the country with benevolence and righteousness. He said that if someone says to people now: "I can make you smart and live a long life," then people will definitely think this is a lie. Because intelligence is inborn nature; life span is naturally ordained. The natural instincts and destiny cannot be learned from others. To please others with what people can't do, this is why the world says he is a deceiver. Teaching people with benevolence and righteousness is like using wisdom and longevity to persuade people, A monarch who values the law will not accept it. Therefore, praising the beauty of others has no benefit to one's own face; only using cosmetics to make up will make one's appearance twice as beautiful as before. So talking about the benevolence and righteousness of deceased emperors in former times is not helpful in governing the country; as long as the laws of the country are clear and the rewards and punishments are resolutely implemented, it is like "cosmetics" that can makes the country rich and strong. Therefore, a wise monarch values things that are helpful to him in governing the

country, but despises the praise of the previous king, so he does not talk about benevolence and righteousness.

2. A Brief Analysis of Zhuangzi' s Thoughts on Governing The Country

those who govern should travel in the area of plainness and merge your Qi 氣 energy with tranquillity, follow the nature of things and have no selfish motives at all. In this way, the world will be at peace. In other words, rulers should return themselves and others to their innate nature. Zhuangzi advocated the concept of governing the country by doing nothing, so even Shun 舜, who was respected by everyone, was not as good as Fuxi 伏羲's governance. Because when Shun governed the world, he perform benevolence in order to win the hearts of the people, and he hoped to influence people through his actions and asked others to approach this goal. This shows that he had a very clear distinction between right and wrong. In his commentary, Chen Xuanying 成玄英 said that in Shun's era, there began to be a frivolous trend of pursuing fame and fortune. I think this was the result of the emperor's purposeful behavior of benevolence and righteousness. In Fuxi's time, people were very simple and happy. This was because Fuxi had no sense of distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, or even between cattle, horses, and humans. Therefore, in the later text of "Ying Diwang", Kuang Jieyu 狂接輿 said that setting rule by rulers examples, no one will dare to refuse to be improved by that is an act of cheating on morality. He also used the metaphor that birds can fly high to avoid predators' arrows, and moles can dig deep holes under the altar of the ancestral temple to avoid people's digging and smoke and fire disasters, explaining that even birds and mice Everyone has their own nature, and they will automatically avoid disasters. The same is true for the people, so if the emperor has any intentions, people will be frightened and avoid them. The above illustrates Zhuangzi's main political thought, which is to return to the true nature that is innate in him, and at the same time

conform to the nature of people and all things, without any selfishness, completely comply with the nature of others and oneself, and there is no increase except in nature, there will be no improper thought, and there will be no pursuit of anything outside. Therefore, in "Ying Diwang", Yang Ziju 陽子居 asked Lao Dan 老聃: "Here is a man, alert and vigorous in responding to all matters, clear-sighted and widely intelligent, and an unwearied student of the Dao - can he be compared to one of the intelligent kings?" Lao Dan asked him in return: "Such a man is to one of the intelligent kings but as the bustling underling of a court who toils his body and distresses his mind with his various contrivances. And moreover, it is the beauty of the skins of the tiger and leopard which makes men hunt them; the agility of the monkey, or (the sagacity of) the dog that catches the yak, which make men lead them in strings; but can one similarly endowed be compared to the intelligent kings?" ¹Lao Dan used the metaphor of the patterns on tigers and leopards to attract hunters and macaques, as well as the skills and abilities of dogs to be restrained, to illustrate that if a king is very smart, has strong insight, and reacts very quickly and agilely, and studying diligently and continuously will only make he toils his body and distresses his mind. Therefore, in the later text, Zhuangzi also said that Sever yourself from fame and do away with schemes. Shun worldly burdens and keep away from wisdom². In other words, let people not arouse the heart of delusion outside of their true nature. If you have something to do, you can do it with due diligence, but don't be attached to it, don't use strategies and cleverness, let alone do things for fame and fortune. When doing things, the mind and heart is like a mirror. When everything comes in front of it, it will show the mirror image without any distinction. It will show the image when it comes, and disappear when it goes away. There will be no hiding or retention. If the king governs the country like a mirror that reflects everything as it comes, without any distinction, then even though the world is vast and there are many things, the king

¹ Zhuangzi 莊子: Inner Chapters : The Normal Course for Rulers and Kings 中國哲學書電子化計畫 <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi/normal-course-for-rulers-and-kings/ens>, 2023/11/9.

² Translated by Qin Xuqing 秦旭卿 and Sun Yongchang 孫雍長. English translation by Wang Rongpei 汪榕培: *LIBRARY OF CHINESE CLASSICS Chinese-English 莊子 Zhuangzi*, Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing Ceremony, 1999. p. 123.

will not toils his body and distresses his mind. This is to use a mirror to explain the state in which the Holy King should govern the country, handle affairs, and face situations. When a king returns to his innate nature, he will have endless wonderful uses. Governing the world in this way will not make the king overworked, and the country will be governed better.

3.Comparing the governing thought of Han Feizi and Zhuang Zi

Han Feizi's governing thought the country was to develop power and establish a legal system. He advocated not talking high-key, but actually doing practical things that benefit the people, so that the country would be strong and powerful enough to prohibit atrocities and manage the people well. There are too many people, and it is difficult to influence everyone with benevolence and righteousness. Therefore, it is better to establish a legal system with clear rewards and punishments, so that people do not dare to do evil things and encourage people to do good deeds. In this way, we can maintain a good order in a country and enable the country to achieve an ideal status. Zhuangzi believes that there is no need to use clever strategies to govern the country, and there should be no distinction between right and wrong.(This does not mean that people can do bad things regardless of right and wrong, but it means that people should maintain their true nature without any other distractions.) Don't do the right thing but ask others to do the same thing as you. Even if there are achievements in governing the world, people will not take credit or be arrogant, because people have just returned to their own nature. The most ideal state of governing the world is that all things, everyone and I are one, with no distinction, no distinction between right and wrong. Both the manager and the managed return to their own nature, and deal with the situation as they should, without making any distinction, less attachment, like a mirror. Comparatively speaking, Han Feizi and Zhuangzi have completely different governance concepts. They are even opposite. Han Feizi distinguishes between right and wrong, and even believes that power can prohibit atrocities. Zhuangzi opposed the use of ingenuity and strategy and advocated

returning to simple nature. It is obvious that the height and level of their views on the problem are different, so the concepts of governing the country are also fundamentally different. What Han Feizi saw was that during the Warring States Period, only countries with strong armies in the raging wars had the absolute right to speak, and could have a foothold and the power to fight against enemy armies and protect the people of their own country; what he saw was the secular phenomenon. Therefore, he believed that only governing the country according to law was the best way. But Zhuangzi saw the nature of people behind the scenes, so I think Han Feizi and Zhuangzi had essential differences in their concepts of governing the country. Han Feizi's method of governing the country by law may be useful to a certain extent, and may even have certain results, but it will also have negative effects, that is, people are no longer simple, but pursue fame and fortune. And what if you meet someone who is not afraid of the law or death? The law has no effect on him. As for using power to ban violence, it is even more unfeasible. It may be effective in the short term, just like Qin Shihuang unified China because of his strong military power. But in the end, he was also violent and did not implement benevolent government, so the country he conquered will be lost in his son's generation. It can be seen that if you want to govern the country well, it is far from enough to have strong military power. It also proves that Han Feizi's philosophy of governing the country may be suitable for some specific situations. People need the rule of law, and the country needs to be rich and the people strong, but they also need to return to benevolence and righteousness, and return to their true nature. So in short, Han Feizi's philosophy of governing the country is relatively one-sided, while Zhuangzi's philosophy of governing the country is fundamental.

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Comparing the governance thoughts of Han Feizi韓非子 and Zhuangzi莊子 from "Xianxue 顯學" and "Yingdiwang應帝王"

Module Code: SICH 7019

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**Majestic power can prohibit atrocities, but deep kindness
cannot prevent disasters.**

「威勢之可以禁暴，而德厚之不足以止亂也。」





Although the monarch of the hostile country said that I have righteousness, I would not pay tribute to him or join the court and become his minister; although the Marquis of Guannei did not appreciate my behavior, I must collect good things and present them to him, pay tribute and be his minister. If a monarch is strong, others will come to worship him and become his minister. If he is weak, he will worship others and become others minister.

「故敵國之君王雖說吾義，吾弗入貢而臣；關內之侯雖非吾行，吾必使執禽而朝，是故力多則人朝，力寡則朝於人。」



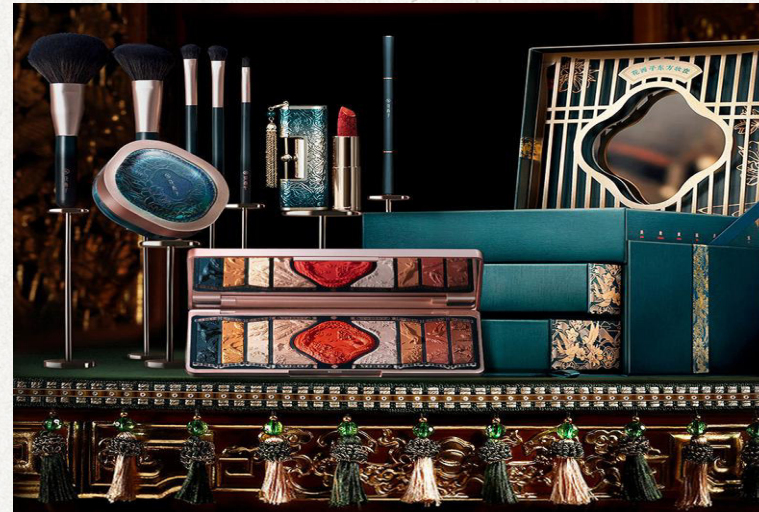
If you must use naturally straight bamboo shafts to make arrow shafts, then you may not be able to make arrows shafts after a hundred generations; if you must use naturally grown round wood to make wheels, you may not be able to make them after a hundred generations.

「夫必恃自直之箭，百世無矢；恃自圓之木，千世無輪矣。」



Talking about the benevolence and righteousness of deceased emperors in former times is not helpful in governing the country. Praising the beauty of others has no benefit to one's own face; only using cosmetics to make up will make one's appearance twice as beautiful as before. A legal system with clear rewards and punishments is the best cosmetics for a country.

「言先王之仁義，無益於治，明吾法度，必吾賞罰者亦國之脂澤粉黛也。」



Travel in the area of plainness and merge your Qi energy with tranquillity, follow the nature of things and have no selfish motives at all. In this way, the world will be at peace.

「汝遊心於淡，合氣於漠，順物自然，而無容私焉，而天下治矣。」



Shun 舜：藏仁以要人

Shun governed the world, he perform benevolence in order to win the hearts of the people, and he hoped to influence people through his actions and asked others to approach this goal.

Fuxi 伏羲：一以己為馬，一以己為牛。

Fuxi had no sense of distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, or even between cattle, horses, and humans.



Setting rule by rulers examples, no one will dare to refuse to be improved by that is an act of cheating on morality.

「告我君人者以己出經式義度，人孰敢不聽而化諸！」

Birds can fly high to avoid predators' arrows, and moles can dig deep holes under the altar of the ancestral temple to avoid people's digging and smoke and fire disasters.

「且鳥高飛以避矰弋之害，鼯鼠深穴乎神丘之下以避熏鑿之患。」



陽子居見老聃曰：「有人於此，嚮疾強梁，物徹疏明，學道不倦。如是者，可比明王乎？」老聃曰：「是於聖人也，胥易技係，勞形怵心者也。且也虎豹之文來田，猿狙之便執鰲之狗來藉。如是者，可比明王乎？」

Yang Ziju asked Lao Dan: "Here is a man, alert and vigorous in responding to all matters, clear-sighted and widely intelligent, and an unwearied student of the Dao - can he be compared to one of the intelligent kings?" Lao Dan asked him in return: "Such a man is to one of the intelligent kings but as the bustling underling of a court who toils his body and distresses his mind with his various contrivances. And moreover, it is the beauty of the skins of the tiger and leopard which makes men hunt them; the agility of the monkey, or (the sagacity of) the dog that catches the yak, which make men lead them in strings; but can one similarly endowed be compared to the intelligent kings?"

——translated by James Legge

「無為名尸，無為謀府，無為事任，無為知主。」

Sever yourself from fame and do away with schemes. Shun worldly burdens and keep away from wisdom.

——translated by Wang Rongpei 汪榕培

「用心若鏡，不將不迎，應而不藏，故能勝物而不傷。」

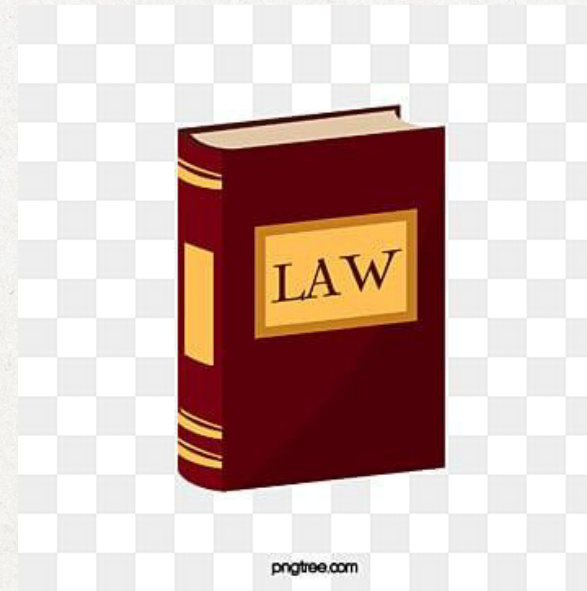
When doing things, the mind and heart is like a mirror. When everything comes in front of it, it will show the mirror image without any distinction. It will show the image when it comes, and disappear when it goes away. There will be no hiding or retention.



Han Feizi

Focus on developing **force** 務力

Establish a rule of **law** system 務法



Zhuangzi

Opposes the use of clever strategies to govern the country and advocates returning to nature.

The most ideal state for governing the world is that everything and everyone is one.

Deal with things like a mirror.



Thanks for listening

